Train Accidents rut' Derailments

424. DR. B.B DUTTA: Will the Minister of RAIL WAYS BE pleased to state:

(a) the number of train accidents and" derailments occurred during the last six months till date in each zone;

(b) the main cause.', ot those accidents and derailmeus

(c) the number of accidents occurred due to failure of Railway staff and equipments, separately;

(d) the number of persons killed or injured therein together with the loss of property suffered by the Railways;

(e) the details of the assistance/relief provided to the victims of those accidents and derailments: and

(f) the remedial steps being taken by Government to avoid such accidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN):

(a) Zone-wise number of train acci dents during January to June, 1997 is as under:

Central—45(33), Eastern—15(10), Northern—31(22), KE—8(5), N.F—7(6), Southern—27(23), S.C—26(21), S.E—44(38), Western—14(12), MTP—1(1), Konkan—2(2) TOTAL 220 (173)

Note: Figures within brackets are number of derailments.

(b) The main causes of the accidents were human failure, equipment failure, sabotage and incidental factors.

(c) As per-preliminary information, 151 accidents were attributable to failure of railway staff and 15 to failure of equip ment.

(d) 100 persons, including 90 road us ers, lost their lives and 254 sustained injuries in these accidents. The cost of damage to railway property was Rs, 17.73 crores approximately.

(e) Immediately after the accidents, ex-gratia amounting to Rs. 1,84,700/- has been given to the dependents of dead and injured rail passengers. No compensation has so far been paid. It will be paid soon after the claims are decreed by the Railway Claims Tribunal.

(f) Some of the measures taken to improve safety and prevent accidents are as unden-

1. The work of track circuiting has been accelerated on the trunk routes and other important main lines.

2. Modification of the signalling circuitry is being carried out to minimise chances of human errors in causing accidents.

3. Auxiliary Warning System for giving advance warning about 'Signal at danger' to the driver of the running train has been commissioned on Bombay suburban sections.

4. There has been progressive increase in use of Tie Tamping and ballast cleaning machines for track maintenance.

5. For monitoring track geometry and running characteristics of the track, sophisticated track recording cars, oscillo-graph cars and portable accelerometers are being progressively used.

6. Maintenance facilities for coaches and wagons have been modernised and upgraded at many depots.

7. To prevent cases of cold breakage of axles, ROH Depots have been equipped with ultrasonic testing equipment for de tection of flaws in the axle,

8. Whistle boardyspeed breakers and road signs have been provided at unmanned level crossings and visibility for drivers has been improved.

9. Audio-visual publicity campaigns to educate road users on how to make a safe crossing are conducted.

10. Steps have been taken to prevent inflammable and explosive materials from being carried in passenger trains.

11. Training facilities for drivers, guards and staff connected with train

operation have been modernised including use of Simulators for training of drivers.

12. Refresher courses regularly organised at specified intervals.

13. Performance of the staff connected with train operation is being constantly monitored and those found deficient are sent for crash training.

14. Periodical safety drivers are conducted to inculcate safety consciousness among the staff.

Uneconomic Railway Lines

425. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a survey has been made recently to identify uneconomic lines run by the Indian Railways;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether rail services on these lines are being stopped; and

(d) if so, how the Government is going to ensure that the economy of such areas is not adversely affected by withdrawal of railway services?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) No survey is done. However, a review of financial results is undertaken every year to identify the Uneconomic Branch Lines run by the Indian Railways.

(b) There were 115 Uneconomic Branch Lines and 9 New Lines which incurred an aggregate loss of Rs. 225.67 crores during 1995-%.

(c) and (d) Railway services on the Uneconomic Lines are generally hot be ing stopped. While taking any final deci sion in this regard, the Railways carefully consider all aspects of the matter, keep ing- in view the traffic potential, the convenience of the local population, av ailability of alternative mode of transport etc. Concurrence of the State Govern ment concerned is also obtained before a decision to close the Uneconomic line and rail services thereof is taken.

CAG s observation regarding mismanagement in Railways

426. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Comptroller and Auditor General of India has blamed the Railways for mismanagement in procurement, maintenance and utilisation of coaches and machinery for Metro Railway in Calcutta;

(b) if so, whether any responsibility has been fixed for committing such lapses, and disciplinary proceedings initiated against such officials;

(c) what is the extent of financial loss as a result of this mismanagement; and

(d) whether any precautions are being taken now to avoid recurrences of such a state of affairs in the Railways?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (d) In his report for the year ended 31-3-1996, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India has made certain observations regarding unproductive investment in the procurement maintenance and utilisation of coaches and machinery for Metro Railway, Calcutta. The same are under examination.

Withdrawal of free railway pass facilities from award winners

427. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA:
SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there was any proposal mooted by Railway Board to withdraw the facilities of free passes to Arjuna award winners, recipient of gallantry awards including widows of award winners; if so, the back-ground of this proposal and the present position;